

Lead safe recreation:

Lead in wild game meat



Reduce lead exposure when hunting and processing wild game meat

- Wild game meat harvested with lead ammunition can be contaminated with lead fragments or lead dust, creating health risks for people who eat the meat.
- Most lead particles in wild game meat will be too small to see, feel, or sense when chewing.
- Pregnant women and children are most at risk from eating meat harvested using lead bullets or shot.

Lead poisoning is preventable! Protect yourself and your family. There is no safe level of lead.



- **Choose safer ammunition.**
 - Due to lower velocities, shotgun slugs and muzzleloader bullets leave less lead than commonly used high-powered soft-point or rapid expanding rifle bullets.
 - Use non-lead, copper or other high-weight retention ammunition.
- **Shoot carefully.**
 - Shots that hit large bones, like the shoulder of a deer, elk, or bear, will fragment more and distribute more lead particles.
- **Process wild game meat safely.**
 - Trim meat liberally around bullet or slug paths to minimize possible lead exposure. Lead fragments can be found as far as 18 inches away from the wound channel.
 - Avoid cuts of meat from areas where heavy bone impacts occurred.
 - Examine the carcass for previous wounds that may contain lead.
 - Avoid washing the carcass, as this may spread any lead fragments.
 - Throw away any trimmed or bruised meat or meat that contains hair, dirt, bone fragments, or grass.
 - If a commercial processor butchers your animal, verify your meat will not be mixed with meat from an unknown source.

Protect yourself and your family from lead exposure

- Swallowing lead fragments can cause serious health problems.
- Children have a greater risk of lead poisoning than adults. Their small, developing bodies absorb more lead for their size.
- Children exposed to lead may develop lower IQ, learning disabilities, stunted growth, kidney damage, attention-related behaviors, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Pregnant women exposed to lead may experience low birth-weight babies, premature births, miscarriage, and stillbirth.
- Adults exposed to lead may develop difficulties with memory, attention, learning, hearing loss, infertility, and high blood pressure.

Test your blood lead levels

- Contact your health care provider and ask for a simple blood lead level test for you and your family. These tests are covered by Medicaid and most private health insurance.
- Children's blood lead levels should be tested by their pediatrician. There is no safe blood lead level in children. However, a blood lead level above 5 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/L) indicates increased risk of health effects.

Resources

Idaho Environmental Health Program's lead page - healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/IndoorEnvironment/Lead/tabid/941/Default.aspx

Idaho Fish and Game/Hunting - idfg.idaho.gov/hunt

Idaho Bureau of Land Management - www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/recreational-shooting/idaho

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – www.epa.gov/lead

Contact

**Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Environmental Health Program**

www.environmentalhealth.dhw.idaho.gov

BCEH@dhw.idaho.gov

(800) 445-8647



Children and pregnant women are most at risk from lead exposure



Never eat, drink, or smoke while handling lead



Remember to stay safe while enjoying your hobby!



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